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# CHICAGOVERSE

*by*

RINNY TEMPLETON





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# CHICAGOVERSE



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RINNY TEMPLETON



THE WATER TOWER PRESS

Chicago: 1949

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*Ill. Hist. Survey*

## *Contents*

|               |    |
|---------------|----|
| Chicago       | 7  |
| Wind          | 8  |
| Wrigley Field | 8  |
| The El        | 9  |
| Skyline       | 10 |
| Night         | 11 |
| Stagg Field   | 12 |
| Lights        | 13 |
| Symphony      | 14 |
| Time          | 15 |

*Ill. Hist. Survey - 10040 P*





### *Chicago*

Out of the dirt and the prairie grass root  
Has sprung a city of steel and soot.  
Out of the river and out of the mire,  
Surviving massacres, gang-wars, and fire,  
“America’s cross roads of enterprise”  
Her name has reached the dirt streaked skies —  
Chicago.

### *Wind*

It sweeps along the boulevard  
And puts pedestrians on guard.  
They clamp their hats down to their heads.

It whistles down from tall skyscrapers  
And carries with it old newspapers.  
It rips and tears them into shreds.

### *Wrigley Field*

It grieves me to say that the score of the Cubs  
Is sometimes exceeded by visiting clubs.

*The El*

Along its lofty grimy tracks  
The ancient elevated clacks.

Not a street car, not a train,  
It travels in its own domain.

Five decades old, it's antiquated,  
Our ever rumbling Elevated.



### *Skyline*

Tall stone buildings stand so high  
    (The Opera House and the Board of Trade)  
The smoke from their chimneys scorches the sky  
    (The Palmer House with its long arcade)  
Stand just so.

While within and below them life surges by  
    (Palmolive, Carbide and Willoughby)  
Their towers stand silent in the sky  
    (Wrigley, Tribune and Three-thirty-three)  
In a row.

## *Night*

Smoke blacked houses, each one sleeps.  
Dust and gust and the prairie wind sweeps  
Through the silence.  
And on its breath blows an old refrain  
Wheels pounding  
Whistle sounding  
Lonely wheels and moaning whistle  
Midnight train.



## *Stagg Field*

Row upon row of deserted stands  
That once heard the clapping of spirited hands  
Tier after tier each desolate seat  
Once rocked by the stamping of college feet  
Stand empty.

Yard upon yard where spectacular plays  
Were usual then, in the good old days,  
The bandstand where, should spirit lag,  
The band would strike up "Wave the Flag"  
Forgotten.

The press box is empty, the scoreboard blank  
And footsteps echo on rotting plank.  
The stars and moon look down and see  
A shell of days that used to be —  
Stagg Field.



## *Lights*

Neon lights

Xeon lights

Blinking through the misty nights

Floor Show Nightly—Shoes Reheeled

Monarch Coffee—Vacuum Sealed.

Flashing lights

Dashing lights

Send their message through the nights

Transients Welcome—Drink Bock Beer

At the National—Movie of the Year.

Lights turn off

Dark again

Dark and silent in the rain.

## *Symphony*

Sing me no song of Chicago  
For Chicago itself is a song.  
It's a song that is noisy and tuneless  
It's a song that is played all day long.

In its base are the pulsating wheels  
Of trolleys and railroads and cars  
While its rhythm is strummed on the chatter  
That floats out of theatres and bars.

The dictaphones blurt out the chorus  
And cash registers ringing up fees  
And the rapid click-clack of the presses  
And staccato of typewriter keys.

The song becomes softer at nightfall  
A soft murmur heard in the park  
And its last note is played on the whistle  
Of the South Shore Electric at dark.

## *Time*

The people, the trains, the busses, the docks,  
The city's pulse is kept with clocks.

Clocks that tic-toc, clocks that chime,  
Clocks that run on standard time  
The big Pabst clock with the neon light  
That tells time and weather through the night.

Clocks on buildings, clocks on towers,  
Clocks that creep or rush with the hours.

The old ornate one at Field's store,  
The modern dial by the Union Station door.

The people, the trains, the busses, the docks,  
The city's pulse is kept with clocks.



*Illustrations by Philip Reed*  
*Printed at the Printing Office of Philip Reed*







